

THE JOURNAL

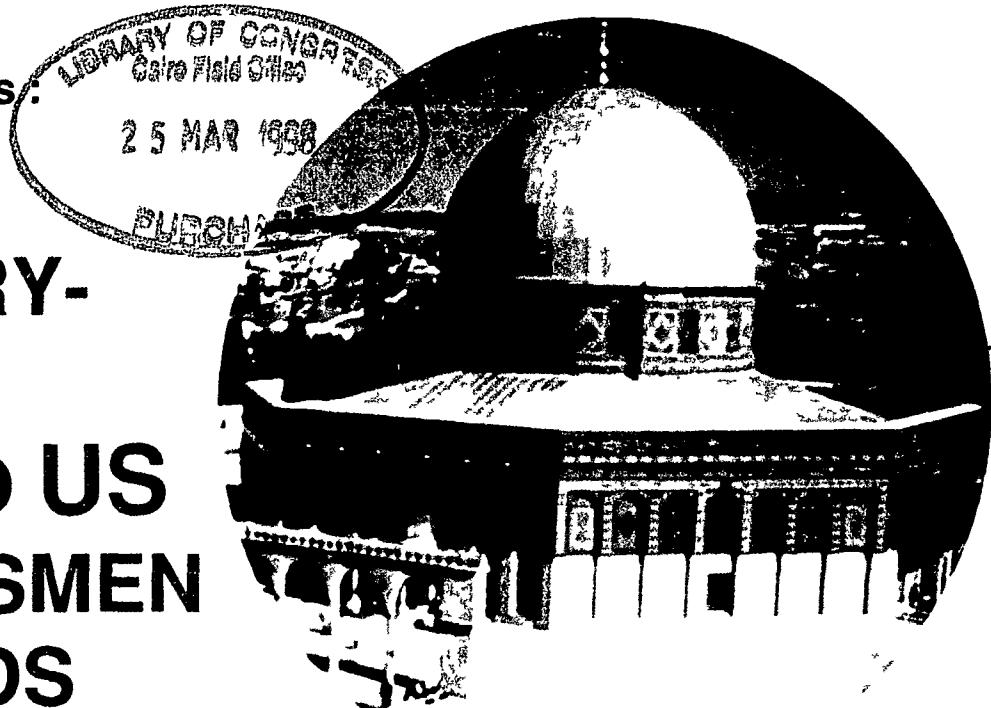
Vol 25

Shawwal 1418 - February 1998

No 10

To Refute Zionist Lies:

**RABITA
SECRETARY-
GENERAL
WRITES TO US
CONGRESSMEN
ON AL-QUDS**



**MWL
Constituent
Council
Holds 35th
Session**



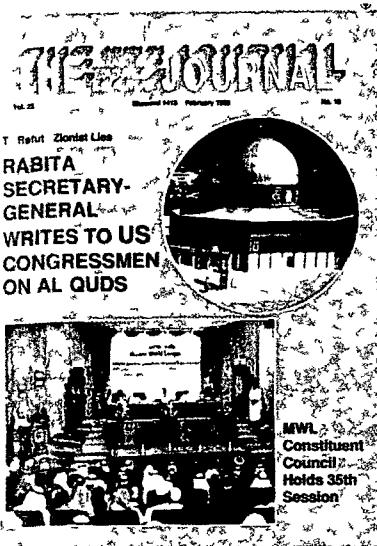
The Journal

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Rabitat al-Alam al-Islami
Makkah al-Mukarramah

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Shawwal 1418 – February 1998

No 10



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World League Journal While the Editorial
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Guidance from the Glorious Qur'an

سُمِّ اللَّهُ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

﴿ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ حَلَقْتُمُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ تُمْ إِذَا اسْتَمْتَ سَرَّ
تَتَسْرُّوْنَ ﴾ (٢) وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ حَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَرْوَاحًا
لَتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَحَلَقَ بِيَكُمْ مُودَةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ
لَا يَاتٌ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَمَكَّرُونَ ﴾ (٢١) وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ حَلَقُ السَّمَاوَاتُ
وَالْأَرْضُ وَاحْتَلَافُ الْأَسْتَكْمُ وَالْأَوْانِكُمْ إِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ لَا يَاتٌ
لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴾ (٢٢) وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ مَا مَأْكُمْ بِاللَّيلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَاتَّعَاوْكُمْ
مَنْ فَصَلَهُ إِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ لَا يَاتٌ لِقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴾ (٢٣) وَمِنْ
آيَاتِهِ يُرِيكُمُ السَّرْقَ حَوْفًا وَطَمْعًا وَيُرِئُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
فَيُحِيِّي بِهِ الْأَرْضَ نَعْدُ مَوْتَهَا إِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ لَا يَاتٌ لِقَوْمٍ
يَعْقُلُونَ ﴾ (٢٤) وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ تَقُومُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ بِأَمْرِهِ تُمْ
إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ دُعَوةً مِنَ الْأَرْضِ إِذَا أَسْتَمْ تَحْرُجُونَ ﴾ (٢٥) ﴿
(سورة الروم الآيات ٢٥-٢)

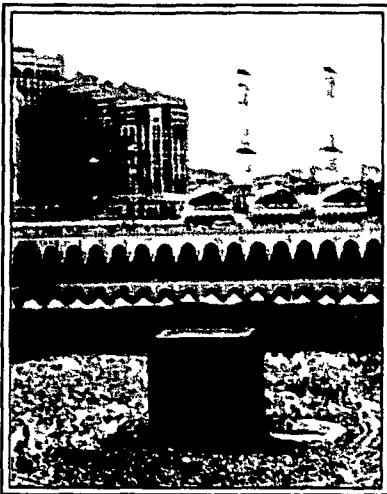
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Among His Signs is this, that He created you¹ from dust, and then behold, you are men scattered (far and wide)²! And among His signs is this, that He created for you mates from among³ yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquillity with them,³ and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts). Verily in that are signs for those who reflect. And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth, and the variations⁴ in your languages and your colours verily in that are signs for those who know. And among His signs is the sleep that you take by night and by day,⁵ and the quest that you (make for livelihood) out of His Bounty verily in that are signs for those who hearken.⁶ And among His signs, He shows you the lightning, by way both of fear⁷ and of hope, and He sends down rain from the sky and with it gives life to the earth after it is dead verily in that are signs for those who are wise. And among His signs is this, that heaven and earth stand by His Command then when He calls you, by a single call, from the earth, behold, you (straightway) come forth.

(S 30 Verses 20-25) Trans A Yusuf Ali

Allama Yusuf Ali in his commentary on the above verses from Surah Ar Rum or The Romans explains some of the terms and phrases as follow

- 1 In spite of the lowly origin of man's body, Allah has given him a mind and soul by which he can almost compass the farthest reaches of Time and Space Is this not enough for a miracle or Sign? From a physical point of view see how man a creature of dust scatters himself over the farthest comers of the earth!
- 2 This refers to the wonderful mystery of sex Children arise out of the union of the sexes And it is always the female sex that brings forth the offspring whether female or male And the father is as necessary as the mother for bringing forth daughters
- 3 Unregenerate man is pugnacious in the male sex, but rest and tranquillity are found in the normal relations of a father and mother dwelling together and bringing up a family A man's chivalry to the opposite sex is natural and Allah-given The friendship of two men between each other is quite different in quality and temper from the feeling which unspoilt nature expects as between men and women There is a special kind of love and tenderness between them And woman is the weaker vessel, that tenderness may from a certain aspect be likened to mercy the protecting kindness which the strong should give to the weak
- 4 The variations in languages and colours may be viewed from the geographical aspect or from the aspect of periods of time All mankind were created of a single pair of parents, yet they



have spread to different countries and climates and developed different languages and different shades of complexions And yet their basic unity remains unaltered They feel in the same way and are all equally under Allah's care Then there are the variations in time Old languages die out and new ones are evolved New conditions of life and thought are constantly evolving, new words and expressions, new syntactical structures, and new modes of pronunciation Even old races die, and new races are born

- 5 If we consider deeply sleep and dreams the refreshment we get from sleep to wakefulness as well as from wakefulness to sleep as also the state of our thoughts and feelings and subconscious self in these conditions are both wonderful and mysterious Normally we sleep by night and do our ordinary work in quest of the Bounty of Allah by day But sleep and rest may come and be necessary by day, and we may have to work by night And our work for our livelihood may pass by insensible transitions to our work or thought or service of a higher and spiritual kind These pro-

cesses suggest a background of things which we know but vaguely, but which are as much miracles as other signs of Allah

- 6 From verse 20 to verse 25 are mentioned a series of signs or Miracles, which should awaken our souls and lead us to true reality if we try to understand Allah (1) There is our own origin and destiny, which must necessarily be our subjective starting-point 'I think, therefore I am' no particular exertion of our being is here necessary (xxx 20) (2) The first beginnings of social life arise through sex and love to understand this in all its bearing we must "reflect" (xxx 21) (3) The next point is to understand our diversities in speech, colour etc arising from differences of climate and external conditions, yet there is unity beneath that diversity which we shall realise by extended knowledge (xxx 22) (4) Next we turn to our psychological conditions, sleep rest visions insight, etc , here we want teaching and guidance, to which we must hearken (xxx 23) (5) Next, we must approach the higher reaches of spiritual hopes and fears as symbolized by such subtle forces of nature as lightning and electricity which may kill the foolish or bring prosperity in its train by rain and abundant harvest, to understand the highest spiritual hopes and fears so symbolized we want the highest wisdom (xxx 24) (6) And lastly we may become so transformed that we rise above all petty worldly ephemeral things Allah calls to us and we rise as from our dead selves to a Height, which we can only describe as the Heaven of stability here no human processes serve for the Call of Allah Himself has come (xxx 25-27)

(Compiled by Muhammad Khalil Mirza)

Sayings of Prophet **Muhammad** peace be on him

The Affliction of Ad-Dajjal

- Narrated Al-Mughira bin Shuba Nobody asked the Prophet (peace be on him) as may questions as I asked regarding Ad-Dajjal The Prophet (peace be on him) said to me, "What worries you about him?" I said "Because the people say that he will have a mountain of bread and a river of water with him (i.e. he will have abundance of food and water)" The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Nay he is too mean to be allowed such a thing by Allah (but it is only to test mankind whether they believe in Allah or in Ad-Dajjal)
- Narrated Anas bin Malik The Prophet (peace be on him) said "Ad-Dajjal will come and encamp at a place close to Madinah and then Madinah will shake thrice whereupon every *kafir* (disbeliever) and hypocrite will go out (of Madinah) towards him
- Narrated Abdullah bin Umar Allah's Apostle (peace be on him) said, 'While I was sleeping, I saw myself (in a dream) performing *Tawaf* around the Ka'aba Behold I saw a reddish white man with lank hair and water dropping from his head I asked 'Who is this?' They replied The son of Mary Then I turned my face to see another man with a huge body red complexion and curly hair and blind in one eye His eye looked like a protruding out grape They said (to me), 'He is Ad-Dajjal'" The Prophet (peace be on him) added 'The man he resembled most is Ibn Qatan a man from the tribe of Khuza'a'
- Narrated Aisha I heard Allah's Apostle (peace be on him) in his prayer seeking refuge with Allah from the afflictions of Ad-Dajjal
- Narrated Hudhaifa The Prophet (peace be on him) said about Ad-Dajjal that he would have water and fire with him (what would seem to be) fire would be cold water and (what would seem to be) water would be fire
- Narrated Anas The Prophet said No prophet was sent but that he warned his followers against the one-eyed liar (Ad-Dajjal) Beware! He is blind in one eye, and your Lord is not so, and there will be written between his (Ad-Dajjal's) eyes (the word) *Kafir* (i.e. disbeliever) (This Hadith is also quoted by Abu Hurairah and Ibn Abbas)

□ Narrated Abu said One day Allah's Apostle (peace be on him) narrated to us a long narration about Ad-Dajjal and among the things he narrated to us, was Ad-Dajjal will come and he will be forbidden to enter the mountain passes of Madinah He will encamp in one of the salt areas neighbouring Madinah and there will appear to him a man who will be the best or one of the best of the people He will say, 'I testify that you are Ad-Dajjal whose story Allah's Apostle (peace be on him) has told us Ad-Dajjal will say (to his audience), Look, if I kill this man then give him life will you have any doubt about my claim?' They will reply, 'No' Then Ad-Dajjal will kill that man and then will make him alive The man will say, 'By Allah now I recognise you more than ever!' Ad-Dajjal will then try to kill him (again) but he will not be given the power to do so

□ Narrated Anas bin Malik The Prophet (peace be on him) said Ad-Dajjal will come to Madinah and find the angels guarding it So Allah willing neither Ad-Dajjal nor plague will be able to come near it

□ Narrated Abu Hurairah The Prophet (peace be on him) said Whenever anyone of you sits in Tashahhud (during prayers) he should seek refuge with Allah from four things in these words,

'O Allah I seek refuge with You from the torment of the hell-fire from the punishment of the grave from the affliction of life and death and from the calamity of the *Masih ad Dajjal* (the misguided imposter)

(Compiled by Muhammad Khalil Mirza)

Cover Story



The Muslim World League Constituent Council held its 35th biennial session in December 1997 in Makkah al Mukarramah. A view of the opening ceremony Seated at the dais Governor of Makkah Region Prince Majid bin Abdul Aziz (centre) flanked by Shaikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz, Chairman of the MWL Council and Dr. Abdullah al Obeidi, MWL Secretary General on the right and Shaikh Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi and Shaikh David Yousof Leclercq a member of the Council from the France

35th Session in Makkah

MWL Constituent Council

Call for Muslim Solidarity

*Muhammad Nasir &
F A Ghazali*

THE Muslim World League Constituent Council, the apex policy-making body of this pan-Islamic, non-governmental, Dawah and humanitarian organisation, with headquarters, in Makkah al-Mukarramah, held its biennial, four-day conference, at the League's

headquarters, at Umm al-Joud, Makkah, from 7 Sha'aban 1418 to 10 Sha'aban 1418, corresponding to 7 December 1997 to 10 December 1997

The three-day session was formally opened by Prince Majed bin Abdul Aziz, Governor of Mak-

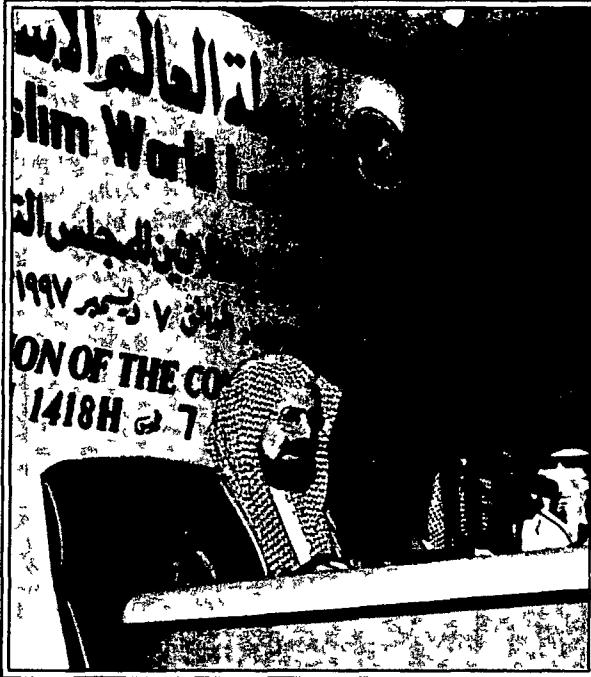
Cover Story

kah Region, on behalf of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz. In his opening address, read out on his behalf by Prince Majeed, King Fahd made an impassioned plea to the Muslim peoples worldwide to forge closer cooperation among them, unify their ranks and work with sincerity, zeal and devotion towards realizing their rightful place among the nations of the world.

King Fahd said that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had been striving, since its establishment by its founder King Abdul Aziz, to unify Muslims, serve Muslim causes and render aid and assistance to those in need wherever they may be living. He recalled that under the late King's patronage, an Islamic conference aimed at co-ordinating and unifying Muslim ranks was held, at Makkah al-Mukarramah, in 1345 Hijrah, which was attended by a large number of Muslim scholars, intellectuals, thinkers and leaders. Several meetings, conferences and organisations followed this early initiative of the Kingdom, the foremost among them being the Rabitat al-Alam al-Islami, which has now grown into an internationally known and active Dawah outfit faithfully serving the cause of Islam and Muslims on sound Islamic principles.

"This meeting is being held at a time when our Muslim nation is faced with innumerable politico-social and cultural problems and hardships with some of its segments even now confronted with a number of hardship despite the much talked-about global relaxation," the Saudi Monarch said and emphasised that the inter-Muslim unity and solidarity has become the need of the hour.

King Fahd observed that the MWL Constituent Council, which represents the Muslim peoples and communities from the various regions



Muslim World League Secretary General Dr. Abdullah Saleh al-Obeid addressing pressment during the conference

of the world, firmly believes in working out peaceful solutions to the various issue of the Ummah through mutual co-ordination and cooperation among themselves. This spirit of Islamic solidarity is being subverted by some misguided elements, who are out to sully the image of Islam by committing terrorist acts in the its name, like killing innocent people, thus disrupting the Ummah's progress and prosperity and destroying its positive accomplishments.

King Fahd observed that, in order to discharge such onerous re-distortions about Islam and Muslims, finding ways and means to implement the Shariah laws in the Muslim society, conducting an assessment of the condition of the Muslim communities in the world, finding suitable methods to help and assist the Palestinian people's struggle, in general, and in Al-Quds, in particular, and evolving an effective plan of action to counter the Judaization plans launched by the Zionist authorities in the Holy City of Jerusalem should occupy the top priority on any Muslim agenda.

He added that the proper planning of the Dawah work together with providing suitable training to workers in their field of Dawah, carefully avoiding all kinds of extremism is absolutely essential and deserves the Council's special attention.

Likewise, devising a comprehensive strategy to challenge and counter the vicious media campaigns and cultural onslaughts against Islam also deserves its urgent attention. "This Council must explore ways to support the Muslim minorities and take up for redressal the various issues that concern them," the King observed.

Cover Story

Lastly, King Fahd reiterated his government's continued and unstinted support and assistance for the Muslim issues, in general, and for the Muslim World League and its global Dawah and humanitarian work, in particular.

Shaikh Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah bin Baz, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the MWL Constituent Council, who spoke next, called on the Muslims to hold fast to Allah's Book and His Noble Prophet's Sunnah, as only these two eternal sources of Divine guidance can ensure their success and prosperity in this world and salvation in the Hereafter. In this connection, he reminded the religious scholars and Dawah activists to exhort the Muslim masses to abide by the provision of the Islamic Shariah in their daily lives and abjure things which are not in conformity with them.

Shaikh Bin Baz urged the Muslim leaders and rulers to solve the various problems facing their countries in the light of the guidance provided in the Qur'an and Sunnah. He also made a forceful plea to them to fear Allah and enforce His laws in their countries as it is the only sure way to success.

On behalf of the assembled delegates of the Council, Shaikh Abul Hassan Ali Nadvi, Rector of the Darul Uloom Nadvatul Ulema, Lucknow, India, and one of the senior-most members of the Council, addressed the dis-

tinguished audience. In his address, Shaikh Nadvi observed that the present session is being held at an appropriate time and at the most suitable venue, as the Muslim Ummah is presently faced with manifold challenges and myriad problems from different quarters which seek to destroy Islam and liquidate its vitality.

The enemies of the Ummah also oppose Shariah so that the Muslims lose their influence and are forced to live on the sidelines of history," he said and added "Our enemies are trying to obstruct Islam's march by various means, as they are convinced that our Faith is capable of foiling their machinations and plots. They can succeed in their nefarious game if the coming Muslim generations lose confidence in their abilities and future," Shaikh Nadvi remarked.

Muslim World League Secretary-General Dr Abdullah Saleh al-Obeid, who spoke at the end, enumerated the various activities of the Muslim World League, which it undertook and has been undertaking to serve, espouse and uphold Muslim issues and concerns. At the top of the League's priorities have, as usual, been the issue of the liberation of Al-Quds, the struggle for lib-

eration in the Indian-held Kashmir, the developing situation in Chechnya and Bosnia, the continuing internecine conflict in Somalia and Afghanistan as well as many other problems facing



A section of the audience at the inaugural ceremony of the 35th session of the Rabita Constituent Council

Muslims in the different regions of the world

Cover Story

Dr Obeid, echoing the sentiments of the eminent speakers, who preceded him, urged a faithful and comprehensive implementation of the Shariah in every walk of the Muslims' daily life, whether it be political, social, economic, educational or cultural

The MWL Secretary-General profusely thanked the Government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for his generous support and benign patronage of the Muslim World League and its Islamic Dawah and humanitarian mission worldwide. Following is the full text of the Secretary-General's speech

Dear Brothers,

"Our meeting comes today within the framework of this new session at a time when Muslims all over the world look forward to you to serve Islam and to help the Muslim peoples, presently passing through unpropitious circumstances. Muslims in many countries face various problems and challenges, that need to be discussed and have dire and urgent needs that require to be met especially by way of material and moral support and assistance, and suffer from oppression, that must be ended without delay

Therefore, the Rabita Secretariat General has been following, since the Council's last session and at various levels and other international forums, too, the causes and concerns of the Muslim Ummah, the topmost among them the problem of Al-Quds and Palestine, the issue of Kashmir, Myanmar (former Burma), Bosnia, Chechnya, Somalia, and Afghanistan as well as problems of Muslim minorities living in the different parts of the world and the social, economic, educational, and cultural challenges, that the Muslim Ummah presently faces

"During this period, the Rabita has continued



The Council appealed to all warring factions in Afghanistan to fear Allah and halt bloodshed and senseless violence

its efforts of serving Islam and Muslims. Its Secretariat General convened and participated in the various international and regional symposia and conferences, including the international symposium on Al-Quds, which was held at the Islamic Cultural Centre, Rome. This symposium, which was attended by intellectuals from various walks of life and received much attention of the media at

both official and non-official levels, declared a comprehensive and firm Islamic stance on Al-Quds and other Islamic sanctuaries. Similarly, the Secretariat General has issued and widely published a number of statements challenging the validity of Israeli and international measures regarding the transfer of embassies and diplomatic missions to Al-Quds.

"Regarding the issues facing the Muslim Ummah, the Secretariat General of the Rabita has extended support and assistance through various means and programmes. It expanded its supervision over the Islamic Cultural Centres in Europe, reviewed their activities and chalked out necessary programmes in order to accelerate their work and help them achieve their objectives in the fields of Islamic Dawah and education.

"In view of the far-reaching impact of the Rabita's offices, missions and centres affiliated to them, the Secretariat General has conducted for the directors of these offices and centres, two training courses at the MWL headquarters, devoted mainly to an in-depth discussion of the requirements of these centres and offices as well as assessment of the problems and needs of Muslims of those regions.

"The Rabita has conducted and assisted in holding training courses for Imam and preachers abroad in order to provide correct Islamic or-

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ientation to the Islamic Dawah work and train preachers to follow a correct and effective Dawah methodology Furthermore, the number of preaches in the different countries of the world has been increased, especially in the Muslim minority areas The Secretariat General has also vigorously followed up the implementation of certain programmes, projects, and donation schemes through the following measures

* To conduct inspection tours by Rabita's officials to a number of Muslim minority areas which may be in dire need of assistance,

* To despatch Rabita's delegations to a number of Muslim and non-Muslim countries to see for themselves at first hand the condition of Muslims and discuss their needs and those of their organisations,

* To invite and host a number of representatives of Islamic organisations and associations all over the world with a view to discussing the problems of their peoples and exploring suitable methods to solve them,

* To authorise Rabita offices abroad as well as the centres affiliated to them to monitor closely the implementation of educational and Dawah programmes as well as relief projects in their areas

Dear brothers,

"The efforts exerted by the Secretariat-General of the Muslim World League have yielded good and tangible results, but still there remains a lot to do, as there are many problems which are still unsolved The problems of Muslims are so manifold and diverse that it is absolutely necessary to first understand the nature of these problems, and then follow-up the developments taking place, in regard to them, in order to correct what is wrong and rectify the situation

"In the course of the follow-up process, the Secretariat General noticed that the bulk of the new problems have their origin in the field of ideological and cultural confrontations Formerly, the Muslim territories and their wealth were the main targets of their enemies, but, today, the target of our enemies has shifted to the Muslim creed, ideology, culture and personalities

"The forces hostile to Islam have distorted the Islamic culture in some Muslim societies and have sown the seeds of discord and confusion among the youths, which has led them to perpetrate heinous crimes, such as killing of innocent people by unidentified persons These forces exploit Muslim ignorance and intra-Muslim disputes for realizing their evil designs, while other anti-Islam elements carry on their false accusations against Islam, and its teachings They also scare away non-Muslims by saying that Islam is the new adversary after the collapse of Communism

"The Secretariat General does not only closely watch the activities of these anti-Islam institutions, but also explores every avenue, both at Islamic and international levels, to confront and foil these flagrant hostilities against the True Religion of Allah With this objective, the Muslim World League had been participating in several conferences and meetings, where it lucidly explained the real viewpoints and attitudes of Islam in deliberations and dialogues

"In addition to books, and periodicals, the Secretariat General also publishes statements, reports, press releases and research studies to counter allegation and accusations against Islam In fulfilment of its mission to disseminate the message of Islam, the Secretariat General explains and expounds the authentic and genuine tenets of Islam and refutes all sorts of false accusations levelled against it and its followers

"The Secretariat General has received good response from the people, in general, to this vital issue It was quite pleased to hear from a number of people, who had a hostile attitude to Islam, the Muslims and Islamic institutions, say that such attitudes arose from their ignorance about the Islamic Faith, and the lack of awareness of the real conditions and situation of the Muslims and the Islamic institutions The Secretariat General was also pleased with the unbiased attitude of a number of people of other faiths towards Islam and Muslims

Dear brothers,

"The duties of the Islamic work are numerous and the Secretariat General has been shouldering huge responsibilities in this regard It therefore

Cover Story

needs all sorts of your encouragement, assistance and support in this work In the name of Allah, I urge you all to extend your helping hand without delay to your Muslim brothers, whenever they may be in the world through your organisations, institutions, and governments in realisation of the spirit of the Muslim brotherhood and in accordance with what Allah says in His Glorious Book "*The Believers are but a single Brotherhood*"

From this platform, I call on our Muslim brothers, who are financially capable, as well as those, who occupy a prominent position in the society to render whatever support and assistance they can, to their brothers The Muslim World League cooperates with all official and non-official organisations and institutions working for the similar noble objectives And thanks to Allah, we have been receiving significant amount of cooperation from these organizations

"We also welcome the combining of the Islamic work at the non official level with that being done at the official one Both are good efforts toward achievement of the common aims of serving the cause of Islam The Secretariat General has always been painstakingly working towards these objectives and shall remain so until the various problems in the domains of the Islamic Dawah, ideology, culture and education are resolved We shall also continue our dialogue with other faiths at the international level, with the guidance of the Qur'an

Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves "

"The Muslim World League expresses its profound thanks and appreciation to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their faithful application of the Islamic Shariah It also lauds those Islamic countries which are exerting efforts towards its implementation in their countries It earnestly urges all other countries to apply the Shariah, in accordance with what Allah says

And this (He commands) 'Judge you between them by what Allah has revealed and follow not their whims " He also says

If any do fail to judge by what Allah has revealed, they are unbelievers "

The League also expects everyone of you to challenge and counter all forms of hostile propaganda and false accusations levelled by the international organisations and institutions, against Islam, especially what concerns the Islamic penal code It also urges you all to forge more cooperation and coordination among yourselves for the realization of these goals

"The League urges people and governments of all Muslim nations to bolster solidarity and cooperation among themselves in conformity with the injunctions of Qur'an *And hold fast all together by the Rope, which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves*" Only by doing so, the Muslim Ummah can regain its glory and rightful place among nations

From this sacred place, and from this Sacred City, the Sanctuary of Security Peace and in the name of the Rabita, I urge all Muslim leaders to enforce the Islamic Shariah in their countries, and institutions and to apply it especially to themselves, and to translate the mottos of solidarity into practice into the lives of their countries and peoples"

Council's Resolutions

The curtain fell on the 35th annual meeting of the Constituent Council of the Muslim World League (MWL), at the MWL headquarters, in Makkah, on 10 December 1997 After in-depth and intense deliberations on the items listed on the agenda, the Council adopted relevant resolutions and recommendations regarding some Muslim issues of the day

The daily proceedings of the four-day conference were presided over by President of the Council and Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Shaikh Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah bin Baz The delegates discussed almost all important issues facing Muslims in different parts of the world, besides the issues relating to Fiqh and socio-cultural aspects of their lives In the concluding session, some resolutions were unanimously adopted

Kingdom Thanked

The Council expressed its thanks to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz and Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz for their strong and unstinted support for the Islamic causes, which the MWL has been upholding and projecting through its periodic meetings and assemblies. It gratefully noted the assurance of King Fahd that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will continue to serve the interest of Islam and Muslims by fostering unity and coordination among the Muslim peoples and their organisations.

In recognition of the continuous support extended so generously by the Government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to the Rabita's Da'wah activities, Shaikh Bin Baz, on behalf of the Council's members, sent telegrams to them, expressing thanks and appreciations for their role in boosting Da'wah work.

New Members

During the meeting, eight new members were inducted to the Council. They are Dr. Osamah Abdullah Khayyat from Saudi Arabia, Shaikh Ahmad Lemu from Nigeria, Shaikh Abdur Rahman Habannaka from Syria, Shaikh Abdullah Sata from Tatarstan, Shaikh Ghaus Vitra from Ivory Coast, Shaikh Muhammad Hussain Abu Sardana from Palestine, Shaikh Muhammad Nazim Muhammad from South Africa and Shaikh Van Noormata from Thailand.

The Council, in its session, discussed a number of important Islamic issues and adopted resolutions on them, some of which are excerpted below.

Shariah Laws

The Council emphatically appealed to a number of Muslim countries, where Shariah laws are not enforced, to implement Shariah laws and chalk out ways of cooperation between the rulers and Islamic scholars to realize this goal. It agreed with the MWL Secretariat-General to launch propaganda campaigns to highlight the virtues of Shariah laws, including preparation of researches and studies on different features of Shariah laws.

Al-Quds & Palestine

The Council thanked the MWL Secretariat-General for the latter's efforts in serving and highlighting the issue of Al-Quds and Palestine, as it also sent a telegram to the OIC leaders, who had assembled for their eighth summit in Tehran (during 9-11 December, 1997) categorically stating that this issue cannot be resolved unless all the Muslims unite their policies and efforts on this crucial issue and take concrete steps towards enforcing the Divine guidance in their lives.

It also noticed the continuous Israeli aggression against the Islamic sanctuaries, including desecration of the Holy Qur'an and Prophets of Allah, conducting raids on mosques, Islamic schools, annexation of Palestinian lands, building of settlements for Jews there and the Judaisation of Al-Quds by altering the city's Islamic characteristics. It also deplored the resolution of the US Congress, which considers Al-Quds as the capital of Israel, urging the United States to exert pressure on Tel Aviv, which has been violating all agreements in this regard.

The Council appreciated the attitude of Christian organisations, which participated in the Rabita's conference in Rome last year, as they endorsed the MWL's stand on preserving the Islamic identity of Al-Quds, the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and establishment of the independent state for them, with the holy city as its capital.

The Council called for strengthening relations with such organisations in order to counter the Zionists' orchestrated goals to usurp the holy city. While discussing the Israeli brutalities, it also lauded the popular resistance against the Israeli occupation in the Syrian Golan Heights, saluted the popular resistance of the militia in South Lebanon, and the occupied Bek'aa region and the Palestinians' heroic struggle in general. It appealed to all the Muslims to support their struggle in all international fora and extend financial assistance to them so that they may continue their struggle and regain their usurped rights.

Cover Story**Serbian Aggression**

The Council expressed its deep anguish over the Serbs' high hardness, who are violating the Dayton Agreement and urged the OIC leaders to pressurise them to implement all terms of the agreement and respect the security of Bosnia-Herzegovina and its territorial integrity. It also asked them to extend assistance for the rebuilding of the war-ravaged country.

Besides, it urged the UN Security Council to adopt resolutions to punish all the war criminals, especially Radovan Kravac and Ratko Mladic, presenting them to the international court of justice as war criminals. It also asked the United Nations to pressurise Serbia to compensate thousands of Muslims, who have been victims of war and massacre launched by the Serb militants against them.

The Council commended the efforts of Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz, the Governor of Riyadh region and Chairman of the Commission for Collection of Donations, for rebuilding the war-ravaged Bosnia-Herzegovina.

It also recommended added coordination with the Islamic Development Bank and the United Council of Islamic Chambers of Commerce and Industries to mobilize funds and form a joint committee so that economic, development and trade activities may be boosted in that country. Besides, it thanked the Rabita and its subsidiary International Islamic Relief Organisation for rendering valuable assistance to the victims of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

It asked the MWL to keep extending its help to Bosnia, especially in educational and training sectors, besides rescuing the Bosnian orphans from clutches of Christian missionary organisations.

Likewise, the Council demanded the international organisations to tackle and resolve the issue of the Muslims in Kosovo and Sanjak before the situation worsens further, paving the way for another tragedy in the Balkans. It also asked the MWL and other Islamic organisations to extend moral as well as material support to the Muslims, who have been suffering from the Serb aggression and oppression in the republics of Serbia and Montenegro region.

Muslims in Sri Lanka

The Council recommended to extend all necessary material and moral assistance to the Muslims in Sri Lanka so that their educational, cultural and religious conditions may be improved. It sought the help of the Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank and other Islamic organisations to help the Sri Lankan Muslim in building mosques and much-needed educational and social institutions. It urged the Sri Lankan government to protect the Muslims, who have become the victims of Tamil war of secession in the island-nation.

Kashmir Issue

The Council deplored the violation of human rights of the Muslim in the Indian occupied Kashmir and condemned atrocities committed by the Indian occupation forces. It called upon the Muslim countries and other international organisations to take bold steps against the Indian government in order to force it to halt its brutality against the Kashmiri Muslims, besides paving the way for solving their issue according to the resolutions of the Security Council. It also urged the Rabita and other charity organisations to extend assistance to the people of Kashmir and help their Islamic organisations in order to enable them to protect their Islamic identity.

Babri Masjid

Regarding the demolished Babri Masjid, the Council asked the Indian government to rebuild it and other mosques, which have been destroyed by the fanatic Hindu organisations, and take appropriate steps to protect other Muslim places of worship in India.

Afghanistan

The Council appealed to all warring factions in Afghanistan to fear Allah as they have lost thousands of their brethren in their internecine fighting, urging them to halt bloodshed and external interference in their internal affairs in order to put an end to senseless violence and civil strife. It asked them to solve their problems through frequent mutual consultations in the light of the Divine guidance.

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The MWL Constituent Council lauded the efforts of the OIC concerning the Afghan issue and urged the MWL to cooperate with the OIC to form a committee of Islamic scholars and jurists which would invite all warring factions to a peaceful settlement Similarly, it asked the Rabita and other Islamic and welfare organisations to come forward with humanitarian assistance to the war-torn Afghan Muslims

Xinjiang Muslims

The Council flayed the Beijing authorities for demolishing the mosques and destroying the copies of the Qur'an's translation and Islamic educational institutions in Xinjiang It asked the OIC to study the issue of Muslims in Eastern Turkistan on international level and extend the much-needed international political support to halt the brutalities against the Muslims and Islamic landmarks in Eastern Turkistan, besides asking the Islamic organisations to help them in preparing documents on the violation of Muslims' rights for presentation before the Islamic and international forums

Somalia Strife

The Council thanked the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, as well as the Arab states, for their efforts to reconcile the warring factions in Somalia It urged all the warring factions to respond positively to their calls Besides, it also called upon the OIC and Islamic organisations to devise a scheme, which may pave the way for stability and prosperity in that war-torn country

Comoro Islands

The Council severely flayed the secessionist movements, which have jolted the stability of the United Islamic Republic of Comoro Islands, calling the people to forge unity amongst themselves in the light of the Divine instruction '*And hold fast all together with the rope, which Allah stretches out for you, and be not divided among yourselves*'

It also called upon the Muslim entrepreneurs, heads of Islamic trade and industrial establishments and the Council of the United Islamic Chambers of Commerce and Industries to divert

their trade and investment projects to Comoro Islands for the betterment of economic, social as well as cultural situation of that Islamic nation

Chechnya

The Council thanked Almighty Allah for the victory He bestowed on the people of Chechnya and called upon the OIC states to consolidate their social, economic and cultural relations with Chechnya It congratulated Chechnya President Aslan Maskhadov for declaring his country as an Islamic state and for his interest in implementing Shariah laws there It also appealed to Islamic organisations to extend material as well as moral support for establishing necessary institutions, employing Islamic jurists and activating Islamic educational system there

It thanked the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for extending hospitality to Chechnya's pilgrims last year, besides thanking Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz, the Governor of the Riyadh region, for extending material support to the people of that country It also urged Islamic countries and organisations to help Chechnya rebuild its infra-structure destroyed during Moscow's war of occupation

Tajik Reconciliation

The Council expressed relief and satisfaction over the national reconciliation, which has been agreed upon between the Government of Tajikistan and the opposition, calling upon the OIC to supervise the implementation of the agreement, besides observing the free elections as had been agreed upon between the two parties It also urged the OIC to extend economic, educational as well as assistance in the scientific and technical fields to the Republic of Tajikistan so that the refugees may return to their homes and called upon the Islamic organisations and establishments so that peace may return to the region

Myanmar (Burma)

The Council flayed the Buddhist extremists' attack on mosques and houses of Muslims in some cities of Burma (Myanmar) in March last It asked Rangoon to halt the subjugation and sup-

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pression of Muslims and punish the culprits, besides compensating the Muslims for the losses they had suffered and helping them rebuild the destroyed mosques, Islamic schools and houses. It also urged the OIC states to look into their problems.

Turkish Cypriots

The Council renewed its support to Turkish Cypriots in their efforts to secure a just solution to their problem. It called upon the Islamic states to consolidate their diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in order to help it achieve political stability, strengthen its economy and get international recognition.

Muslims in Indo-China

The Council discussed the religious and economic situation of the Muslims in the Indo-China region, and thanked the MWL for being in touch with them. It urged the Islamic organisations to extend necessary moral and materiel support to them in order to enable them improve their socio-economic conditions.

Christian Missionary Campaigns

The Council discussed the missionary activities for some Christian organisations among the Muslims, calling upon the OIC states and Islamic organisations to be on their guard to meet and counter this challenge, by banning their books and brochures and warning the Muslims against their conspiracies.

The Council emphasised that the Islamic education was the only way to protect the Muslims from the malicious missionary campaigns, aimed at creating confusion and destroying their unity. It also noticed with concern the increasing Christian onslaughts against the Muslims in the Muslim states of Central Asia and in some Balkan states, which gained independence after the collapse of former Soviet Union, as it also had noticed the Christian infiltration in the Russia as a whole. It urged the MWL and other Islamic organisations to help the Muslims of these states and regions in preserving their Islamic identity.

General Recommendations

1 The Council recommended the Muslim sponsors of international satellite channels in Europe and America to include Islamic teachings in their programmes and disseminate correct information about Islam and Muslims. It also asked the owners and sponsors of these channels to deal fairly with the topics they discuss, especially the issues that come within the framework of Islam's unchangeable fundamental principles.

2 The Council thanked the Secretary-General of the Rabita and his colleagues for their visits to the countries they mentioned in their reports as well as for their extension of moral and material support to the Muslims during their visits to those countries. It emphasised the need for more such visits, in order to consolidate the relations with Muslim minorities and provide informations about the Muslims around the globe.

3 The Council observed what the Western media propagate and the malicious campaigns, which some Westerners conduct against Islamic culture and creed, besides distorting facts and history of Islam and its past glory. It urged the Muslim thinkers, scientists and Islamic organisations to refute these distortions and explain the facts, besides inviting these people to the basic teachings and tenets of Islam with wisdom and in a decent manner.

4 The Council reviewed the working of the Rabita's offices and the affiliated Islamic centres outside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as well as the activities of the MWL Secretariat-General. It thanked MWL's for its efforts and asked it to continue its support to its external offices so that they may perform their duties smoothly and efficiently.

5 Considering the importance of the media, the Council urged the MWL to publish mass reprints in English of its periodicals with a view to explaining Islamic views and defending Muslim issues, besides publishing brochures in different languages to explain fundamentals of Islam and provide guidance about its pillars of Faith and various rituals of worship.

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On Al-Quds Issue

MWL Secretary-General's Memorandum to US Congressmen

Hon'ble Chairman and Members of the Congress,

Kindly accept our best compliments

In my capacity as the Secretary-General of the Muslim World League an international, non-governmental organization, based in the Holy City of Makkah al-Mukarramah with representation of Muslim organizations on its various councils, I would like to state that, the Muslim World League has been monitoring the ongoing events, as well as the Israeli measures and operations in Al-Quds (Jerusalem), which are designed to transform the demographic and geographic aspects of the Holy City. Arab inhabitants are evicted from their districts to make way for new settlements designed to house Jewish settlers in violation of resolutions adopted by both the UN and the Security Council – the mouthpiece of the international community at large.

Moreover, this Secretariat has been monitoring international attitudes towards Al-Quds, including, of course the attitude of the US Congress which recently voted to

- 1) Recognize Al Quds (Jerusalem) as the unified capital of Israel
- 2) Move the US embassy to Al Quds according to the demand made by Senator Bob Dole by May 31st, 1999
- 3) Allocate one hundred million dollars (\$100 000 000) for the construction of a US embassy in Al-Quds
- 4) Curtail American aid to the Palestinian Authority until it ends its opposition to the sale of Palestinian land to Jews

Accordingly, by virtue of my responsibility as the Secretary-General of the Muslim World League – the mouthpiece of a quarter of the world's population, I would like to call your attention to Muslim grievances and aspirations with regard to the city of Al-Quds- Jerusalem

Hon'ble Chairman and Members of the Congress,

Historical documents show that, since the dawn of history, Al-Quds (Jerusalem) has always been a highly regarded Arab city. It was inhabited by the Arab Canaanites and Yabusid tribes, and its mention in the Glorious Qur'an and the Hadith (tradition of Prophet Muhammad), has earned it both a significant and cherished position in the hearts of all Muslims who regard it as a part of their history. They are deeply attached to it, and are prepared to defend it against any aggression. Both its religious history and sanctuaries are strongly connected with their basic tenets.

Although, it is true that, over the years, Al-Quds (Jerusalem) has been exposed to outside invasion, it does not follow that its ownership has been transferred to the invaders. For example in the twelfth century BC, Al-Quds (Jerusalem) was invaded and colonized by the Hebrews for about seventy years, then came the Persian invaders in 586 BC, followed by Alexander the Great in 332 BC, and the Romans in the year 70 A D. But, its Arab inhabitants have always driven away the invaders, and kept the city as a purely Arab city, and it remained like that until the Islamic conquest in the sixth century, in the year 23 A H when the Muslims named it 'Baitul Maqdis'

Moreover, in the same manner as it was exposed to foreign occupation before the advent of Islam, Al-Quds was the object of invasion – after the emergence of Islam. In the medieval era, Crusaders coming from Europe entered the region, and after the Second World War Palestine and its capital Al-Quds were placed under the British Mandate. Nevertheless the colonial forces finally left and Al-Quds remained both as an Arab and an Islamic city as ever, and maintained its distinguishing features.

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With the exception of the Israelis who claim it to be a Hebrew city in total disregard of the historical fact that the city was first established by the Arab Canaanites at the beginning of the Bronze Age, no invading or occupying power ever dared to alter the features of the Holy city. Moreover, the fact that the Arabs, according to archaeological discoveries and history books, were in Palestine two thousand six hundred years before the Hebrew invasion, and the fact that the Hebrew rule of Al-Quds in the twelfth century BC did not exceed seventy consecutive years, and the fact that the Jewish presence in Palestine dwindled during the Roman and Byzantine rule when most Jews of Palestine embraced Christianity, go a long way to disprove all claims that Al-Quds (Jerusalem) and Palestine belong to the Jews.

Subsequently Islam became the religion of the majority of the people of Palestine, and during the European invasions of the 15th and 16th centuries, the number of Jews further declined to 250, and only increased to about 1500 after the arrival of the Spanish Jews following the calamity that befell them and the Muslims in Andalusia in the year 1492.

Furthermore, a closer look at the history of the region will show that, over the centuries, Palestine, and Al-Quds, for that matter, have been the abode of the Palestinians, as well as a passage way and a coveted destination for various peoples, military expeditions and for the believers in Divine faiths, and the Palestinians, according to objective writers, have always provided those believers with an atmosphere of tolerance freedom of worship, protection and hospitality.

In later years when the crusades began, Muslim values and sanctuaries were subjected to violations and transgression at the hands of individuals, countries and groups, and the situation became stable once again only when Salahuddin retook the city and the rest of the holy places in Palestine.

Under the Islamic rule, the followers of the three Divine religions lived together in peace, and visitors for religious purposes as well as persons fleeing persecution were received by the Palestinians with open arms.

However, after the Second World War, when Jews of various nationalities began to converge on Palestine, and the subsequent establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 following the Balfour declaration of 1917, which offered the Jews a national homeland in Palestine, Al-Quds has been the object of continuous violations.

Since then Israel has perpetrated all forms of aggression against this Arab country and its institutions,

especially against the city of Al-Quds (Jerusalem) – the subject of this memorandum which has suffered serious violations. Its Arab and Islamic features have been drastically altered by the Israeli authorities.

Most of its inhabitants were forcefully evicted to make way for Zionist settlers while excavation works persisted and tunnels were dug under the foundations of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.

For a more clear idea about the transgression against the Great Mosque, and the malicious schemes drawn by the successive Israeli governments in this regard, it suffices to state that, in the wake of the 1967 War, when Israel occupied Al-Quds (Jerusalem), it immediately began to implement definite policies against the Al-Aqsa Mosque in utter disregard of Muslim feelings. First, large-scale excavation under the Holy Mosque was undertaken under the pretext of searching for Jewish antiquities, although the real motive was to weaken the foundations of the Holy Mosques and eventually ruin it.

Hence, in response to a question in this regard, former army Rabbi, Goren pointed out that the building of a Jewish temple in place of the Holy Mosque would be possible in the event of its decay and demolition caused by natural elements.

However, when the excavations failed to achieve the desired goal as a result of the resistance by both the Muslim and international public opinion, the Holy Mosque was deliberately set on fire on August 21, 1969, by a person the Israelis claimed was a lunatic.

Nevertheless, attempts to change the characteristics of Al-Quds continued unabated.

Later on, in another bloody episode, a so-called Israeli lunatic indiscriminately opened fire on Muslims praying at the "Dome of the Rock" Mosque with the aim of terrifying and driving them away from performing their religious rites. This was followed by another episode during which another Israeli lunatic indiscriminately opened fire on Muslims at the Al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron, killing scores of Muslims who were engaged in prayers at the Mosque.

There are other examples of the continued Israeli aggression on Al-Aqsa Mosque, as well as on the Arab and Islamic institutions in the Holy City of Al-Quds, as recorded in the complaints lodged with both the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations, including recent attempts by the Netanyahu Government of digging a tunnel under the Holy Mosque, the establishment of new settlements in the eastern part of occupied Al-Quds (Jerusalem) and confiscation of the identity cards of its Palestinian inhabitants.

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Now the question is, what is the future of Al-Quds supposed to be? How do we get to this future? Al-Quds is suffering under the yoke of the Israeli occupation and violations, and the entire world has expressed consternation in various ways, especially through the resolutions of the Security Council

For example, after considering the condition of Al-Quds and the other territories occupied in 1967 during numerous sessions, the Security Council adopted a number of resolutions barring Israel from tampering with Al-Quds (Jerusalem) or causing any changes in its geographical position, or treating it as its capital. In this regard, a special reference may be made to resolutions 242 and 338, which clearly consider Al-Quds as part of the occupied Arab territories, and resolution 252 of May 21, 1968, which says that, all administrative or legislative measures, or any action, which could alter the legal status of Al-Quds, should be considered null and void and urged Israel to desist from such actions, and resolution 267 of July 3, 1969 which urged Israel to abide by the provision of resolution 252.

Moreover, in resolution 271 of September 15, 1969, the Security Council deeply deplored the damage caused by the outbreak of fire in the Al-Aqsa Mosque on August 21, 1969. The Council then reaffirmed its stand on resolutions 252 and 367 by insisting that any destruction or defilement of Islamic sanctuaries, or any encouragement or connivance at such action poses a threat to international peace and security.

Also, in September 25, 1971, the Security Council adopted resolution 298 in which the Council reaffirmed its position with regard to previous resolutions, and made a special reference to resolutions 465 and 476, which considered all administrative and legislative measures taken by Israel with a view to altering the status of Al-Quds, null and void.

Resolution 478 of 1980 regarded the transfer of embassies and other diplomatic missions to Al-Quds an illegal act. This resolution together with the other resolutions, regarded as null and void, the law passed by Israel to declare Al-Quds its unified capital, and likewise, all measures designed to change the Holy City's geographical and demographic status and violation of the sanctity of both the Islamic and Christian sanctuaries with the aim of replacing the Holy City's original characteristics with a Jewish character.

Moreover, in resolution 1073 adopted on September 28, 1996, the Security Council expressed deep concern about the serious deterioration of conditions in Al-Quds and regarded Israel's digging of a tunnel

under the Holy Mosque as the direct cause of this state of affairs.

Hence, the international community especially the United States of America, in its capacity as one of the advocates of a just and comprehensive peace in the region, is called upon to avoid dealing with the Israeli occupation authorities in a manner that may be construed as implicit recognition of the status quo imposed by Israel through its declaration of Al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the capital of the Jewish state.

At this juncture, it may be recalled that the people of Palestine have – through their legitimate leadership and national authority – already declared their commitment to international legitimacy, as well as their determination to fulfil their obligations within the international community.

Likewise, through the resolutions adopted by the Organization of the Islamic Conference at both the summit and ministerial levels, the Muslim community has – through the Muslim World League and other non-governmental Islamic organizations – has expressed its willingness to commit itself to the international legitimacy.

Therefore, the international community, and, in particular, the United States of America must in turn fulfil its obligations by pursuing a practical policy towards the Israeli occupation of Al-Quds and other Arab territories. Indeed the past years have proved beyond doubt that individual or collective declarations are not enough, and that merely passing resolutions without adopting practical policies towards their implementation cannot restrain the Israeli aggressors from persistence in their violations.

It has become abundantly clear by the policies pursued by the Israeli occupation forces that the Jewish state is continuously in the habit of committing excesses, such as the continued setting up of settlements on the eastern parts of Al-Quds (Jerusalem), and the demolition of houses belonging to Palestinians. That is all the more why Israel is unwilling to take steps towards peace, and that is why it is all the more imperative on the super powers, especially the United States of America, to fulfil their obligation, by imposing a just and comprehensive peace and accordingly, by helping the Palestine National Authority carry out its duties, and fulfil its obligations in accordance with the concept of international legitimacy.

In fact, a just and comprehensive peace can only be achieved by finding the right solution to the problem of Al-Quds, in particular, and the problem of Palestine, in general, in a manner that will enable the people of Palestine to exercise their fundamental national

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rights, by returning to their homeland enjoying the right of self-determination and establishing their independent state

As a first step towards achieving this end Israel must pull out of the occupied Arab territories including Al-Quds (Jerusalem) and implement UN resolutions concerning Palestine

Hon'ble Chairman and Members of the Congress,

Every community has its unique values, culture and symbols. Territory is one of the repositories of those values and symbols. The community's value rises higher, if the territory is directly connected with the community's relations with God i.e. when the territory represents a place of worship or a Divine message.

This is how sanctity and values are formed. The status of Al-Quds (Jerusalem) in the eyes of the Muslim, emanates from both the sanctity and values it embodies. Al-Quds is the land that houses the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the point of beginning of Prophet Muhammad's nocturnal journey and subsequent ascension to the heavens where the five obligatory prayers a Muslim must offer daily were commanded by the Almighty.

The relation between a Muslim and Al-Quds is therefore, deeply rooted in religion. Moreover, from the time the rightly-guided Caliph Omar bin al-Khattab took it over until the time Salahuddin retrieved it from the hands of outside invaders, Al-Quds became a shining example of the way Muslims are wont to treat others.

Thus the relation between the Muslim and Al-Quds has a political as well as a cultural background. Throughout the ages Muslims have upheld, and would continue to uphold the sanctuaries of Al-Quds.

Al-Quds is both a symbol of the sanctity of Divine religions, and a model of coexistence. All forms of disputes emerging in Al-Quds were referred to God's judgment which is the most equitable judgment.

We cherish the hope that, all the distinguished Members of the US Congress would be able to understand that, Muslims demand nothing except justice and cessation of aggression and injustice against man, environment and culture.

Distinguished Members of the Congress,

In the light of the foregoing historical reality and Israel's defiance of will of the international community, as manifested by the prevailing situation in Al-Quds (Jerusalem), the Muslim World League

would like to emphasize that, the recent decision of the US Congress to consider Al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the eternal capital of Israel apart from being a gross injustice, is detrimental to the credibility of the US attitude towards maintaining peace and security in the world. The decision, not only entangles the government and the people of the United States of America in problems relating to international law, and the historical rights of the Muslim inhabitants of the Holy City but also stands at variance with the resolutions of the UN and the Security Council.

Hence while placing this brief memorandum before the august house of the US Congress for consideration and subsequent adoption of positions compatible with historical facts, the Muslim World League cherishes the hope that while doing so, the Congress would also take the strong relations binding the US with Muslims as well as the various real interests of the American people into consideration. Indeed it is not unbecoming of the US Congress to speak out the truth, even if, in doing so, it would have to retract its position and nullify its decision, which is seen by Muslims as one not taken by the US Congress but either by the Israeli Knesset or the fanatic government of Benjamin Netanyahu.

In conclusion the Muslim World League would like to convey its compliments to the august Congress – the elected representative House of the greatest country on earth.

Indeed it is expected that the Congress would make all possible efforts to abide by the provisions of international law that outlaws occupation of other people's territory by force, so that the aggressor is not rewarded for committing acts of aggression.

Moreover the Muslim World League would like to prevail upon the Members of the US Congress, who belong to various religious and ideological persuasions, to stand up against the forces of violence and to persuade Israel to desist from the acts of demolishing Palestinian homes and the evicting forcefully the Arab inhabitants of Al-Quds from their homes.

Peace must be restored to the Holy City and its Muslim, Christian and Jewish inhabitants. Peace and happiness would no doubt reign supreme everywhere in the world when international treaties, norms and laws are solemnly respected.

Dr Abdullah bin Saleh al Obeid
Secretary General
Muslim World League

The Eighth Islamic Summit Meeting in Tehran

MWL Journal Staff



Iranian President Muhammad Khatami (right) welcomes Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz at Mehrabad Airport near Tehran. The Crown Prince led the delegation of the Kingdom to the OIC Summit held in Tehran

IRAN'S paramount leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei opened the eighth Islamic summit, in Tehran Iran on 9 December, 1997, with a rallying call for the liberation of Palestine and a fiery blast at the United States. Until now it is the enemy which has the initiative and we have only ourselves to blame," Khamenei told leaders from the 55 members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

The enemy has set itself up on the land of Palestine armed settlers divided Arab land and annexed territory from Jordan Egypt and Syria said Khamenei Only the youth of Palestine and Lebanon

have been fighting with all their power," he told the largest international Islamic gathering in Iran

But Iranian President Muhammad Khatami who addressed delegates shortly afterwards, struck a much more conciliatory tone towards the West 'It is necessary to know the West There are so many positive achievements by the Western world that non-Westerners can learn from,' said Khatami

"There is a difference between Islamic civilization and Greco-Roman, but no conflict We should be open to other points of view' Khatami said he was pushing Iran toward a humane Islamic civil society, and he urged OIC members to follow suit "In an Islamic civil society, there is no sign of any individual or collective despotic behaviour no trace of any dictatorship In such a society human rights are respected, he said

The Muslim world united in anger against Israel's hard-line government at the opening of the summit, branding the Jewish state an enemy of Islam and a threat to Middle East peace "Zionist aggression against Arab land is the most serious danger facing the entire Muslim community" Syrian President Hafez al-Assad told leaders The Zionist state has worked along with others to sow seeds of dissension in Arab and Muslim lands,' said Assad chosen by fellow Arab states to address the summit opening on their behalf

The summit held two open sessions during which the leaders listened to the speeches of some heads of delegations Outstanding among them were Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah, Deputy Premier and Commander of the National Guard, Syrian President Hafiz Assad and Lebanese President Ilyas Hrawi

The speeches made by Khamenei and Khatami reflected the different lines they adopt in expressing the Iranian policy towards foreign issues. While Khamenei did not deviate much from his usual tough line, Khatami chose to depict his new policy of openness. Khamenei condemned what he called the new colonialism and comprehensive offensive in the political, economic and media fields from the Western forces. But Khatami underlined the need for abandoning the Cold War idea based on the presence of an external enemy or assumption of its presence.

The Iranian President handled the sensitive issues like the peace process in a visibly moderate tone. But Khamenei renewed Iran's opposition to the peace negotiations, which he considered "unjust, humiliating and illogical." Khamenei blasted the land for peace plan, saying it meant that the Zionists will give back the occupied land to keep Palestine.

He said it was time for the Islamic world to give a befitting reply to the world arrogance. "If we arrange our relations on the basis of brotherhood, we would be able to do so," he added.

Meanwhile, the United States renewed its call for an official dialogue with Iran after Khatami made a similar appeal in a speech in Tehran. "We want to have a dialogue with Iran," State Department spokesman James Foley said in Washington, on 9 December, 1997. "Our only stipulation has been that such a dialogue take place with an authorized representative of the government."

Khamenei, however, fired an angry broadside at the United States – blaming Washington for blackening the international reputation of Iran and working in cahoots with Israel. "Peace in return for land, that is a surprise. That means that the Zionists will give back the occupied land to keep Palestine," he said. "Is there anything more unjust than this? It is a joke," Khamenei said.

Throughout he stressed the summit's theme of Islamic unity, saying the Muslim world should coordinate to shape the future of the planet and defeat the corrupt culture of the West. On Israel and the peace process, Khatami echoed Khamenei's tough line. "Israel has a belligerent, racist and terrorist nature, and its search for weapons of mass destruction is a threat to regional stability," he said.

The three-day summit of the OIC, representing 1.2 billion Muslims around the world, brought more than 30 heads of state, prime ministers and crown princes to Iran. Khamenei reached out to Iran's former foes in his speech, saying "I declare here that no threat will ever come from Iran to any Muslim country."

The summit opened with a recitation of verses from the Holy Qur'an, before Khamenei set the tone with a thundering diatribe against Israel and the West. Khatami also called for the Muslim world to unite and stand together to defy Israel.

OIC Secretary-General Ezzedin Laraki carried on the theme in his speech to the delegates. "Israel is destroying peace by building Jewish settlements violating human rights, killing people and demolishing houses," Laraki told the packed conference hall.

Even UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, while staying a model of even-handedness, expressed "deep dismay" at the collapse of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks and called on both sides to respect the interim peace accords.

The so-called "Islamist extremists" came under attack from the chiefs of the United Nations and the Arab League and Muslim leaders at the summit. "Extremists gave Islam a bad name," UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said at the start of the triennial conference, adding that he was distressed by the increasing resort to violence and terror by extremist groups in the name of Islam.

"They are sullying the image of a religion, whose very name signifies peace and whose God Almighty is Compassionate and Merciful. Tolerance and justice are values we must constantly strive for," he said.

Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdel-Meguid said some Western countries were trying to categorize Muslims as terrorists and misuse the name of Islam by linking it with terrorism although it was the religion of peace and tolerance.

"We have every hope your conference will be able to confront this phenomenon of terrorism that is endangering many of our Arab and Islamic countries," he told the OIC leaders. He also said that while Arabs condemned terrorism in all its forms, "we should not confuse terrorism and legitimate struggles to liberate our land from illegitimate occupation."

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Muhammad said his country was "deeply saddened by the killings of foreigners and Muslim brothers alike in some Islamic countries. "They are not in accord with Islam and they really do not help the cause of Islam," he said.

In addition to the peace process, the texts deliberated upon by the participants also dealt with burning Muslim issues such as the ongoing war in Afghanistan, the violence in Kashmir and the fragile situation in Bosnia. Among the economic and cultural resolutions approved are texts relating to women's

ights, an Islamic charter of human rights and the need to boost trade among Muslim states

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat called for the lifting of "unjust" UN sanctions imposed on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. "We confirm our sincere and continuous appeals to end the unjust siege imposed on brotherly Iraq, and to end unjust sanctions on its children and people."

Muslim leaders, taking advantage of their target gathering of the present century, stepped up their diplomatic drive to promote reconciliation among the OIC states by holding a flurry of meetings on the sidelines of the conference. The summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference debated a number of major issues, including Jerusalem-Arab-Israeli conflict and Afghanistan. They worked for a united stand against the Israeli intransigence which has derailed the peace process.

On the Iranian side paramount leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, President Muhammad Khatami and former President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani spearheaded Iran's effort, profiting from the biggest gathering of world leaders, assembled in Tehran.

A very significant development witnessed during the summit meeting was that the three Iranian-leaders Khamenei, Khatami and Rafsanjani pushed Iran's rapprochement with Saudi Arabia in separate meetings with Crown Prince Abdullah, Deputy Premier and Commander of the National Guard, who was representing Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd at the summit.

"The government of Iran has resolved to boost relations with Saudi Arabia and if the Saudis wish the same, this goal will be realized. Iran has no serious problem with any Muslim country," Khamenei said.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al Faisal reciprocated by saying that Riyadh wanted better relations with Tehran. "If political intentions of the two countries come closer, then I am sure that things would become better."

Speaking to reporters later, Prince Saud also hoped that the Tehran summit would strengthen Islamic solidarity. "The summit conference is proceeding well," he said and attributed its success to the early preparation.

"Iran and Turkey have historical ties and nothing can separate them. Iran and Turkey play a role in shaping the Islamic civilization and they should continue bilateral relations," said Khatami.

Addressing the summit on the second day, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat made an emotional

appeal to the Muslim world to save Jerusalem from an Israeli settlement onslaught, and to back his quest for a peace of the brave. "To save Jerusalem from the beast of non-stop settlement and from the invasion of Judaism is a religious duty for all of us," Arafat said. The Palestinian leader also pleaded with his audience, which included around 30 presidents and prime ministers not to abandon the search for the "peace of the brave" begun at the 1991 Madrid conference.

"Saving, protecting and pushing forward the peace process on all its negotiating tracks has become an international responsibility, and the responsibility of all those who believe in peace" he said. But President Assad urged OIC leaders to abandon the peace process and have no dealings with Israel. "We call on our brothers in Islamic countries to stop dealing with Israel, particularly in strategic fields, because it attacks Islam and Muslims," he said.

Lebanese President Elias Hrawi told Rafsanjani that "Lebanon's problems stem from the aggressions of the Zionist enemy" and called for Muslim unity to put an end to the "Zionist aggressions".

The war in Afghanistan also found itself high on the agenda, with a flurry of meetings on the issue after a host of leaders at the summit voiced deep gloom about the unending cycle of violence in the country.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif met with Khatami during the summit and called on Iran to cooperate in the search to find a "lasting peace" in war-torn Afghanistan. Sharif earlier told the official Iranian news agency IRNA that the two countries' leaders would try to find a "common avenue" to end the deadly civil war.

The Summit's Outcome

Speaking about the outcome of the Tehran summit, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz has reiterated that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would continue supporting the Islamic action, spreading Islamic Dawah and aiding and assisting Muslim people, wherever they are, and would back the Islamic countries and support their causes in different international gatherings and assemblies.

Speaking at the regular weekly meeting of the council of ministers which he presided over, on 16 December, 1997, he said that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would stand firmly beside any Islamic country in all matters, that served the Muslim people and strengthened their position at the Islamic and international levels.

The King highlighted the most outstanding contributions of the Kingdom to all Islamic bodies, institutions and organizations, particularly, to the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the Muslim World League (MWL) and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) in addition to setting up mosques and Islamic centres all over the world. King Fahd termed the Kingdom's efforts in these areas as a natural outcome of the Kingdom's policy since its unification by the late King Abdul Aziz.

The council of ministers listened to a brief report presented by Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, Deputy Premier and Head of the National Guard, on the outcome of the 8th OIC summit, which ended in Tehran, on 11 December 1997. King Fahd hailed the successful and distinguished efforts made by the Crown Prince during the summit.

The cabinet welcomed the resolutions of the summit, which aimed at closing the Muslim ranks, unifying the Ummah's efforts, consolidating Islamic action and developing the Muslim Ummah to realize better levels of cooperation and coherence.

"The just-concluded Tehran summit was a great success," according to OIC Secretary-General Ezeddin Laraki. The financial support the organization received from a number of member countries, which came to around \$ 20 million, marked one of its most outstanding achievements, he told in an interview.

The donation would help the organization play its role in a better way and enable him to implement his reform programmes, he said. "Holding the summit in Iran has helped the Muslim countries to come closer and bring about the unity of the Muslim Ummah," he said. The summit has strengthened the organization and made it better qualified to play the role expected of it, Laraki added.

Replying to a question, Laraki pointed out that the donations have strengthened the trust in the organization. It also shows that the Muslim countries have now become convinced of the need for developing the organization in such a way as to keep pace with the global developments after 30 years of its inception, he said.

Replying to another question, Laraki underlined the cooperation between the United Nations and OIC. The participation of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan shows the credibility, which the OIC enjoys with the world body, he said. "We have extended cooperation with the UN in the past and will continue to do so," he declared.

Asked how far the summit has succeeded in creat-

ing a ground for reconciliation, Laraki replied that differences are quite natural in an organization comprising 55 countries. Having differences is not harmful. What is harmful is lack of willingness to solve the differences peacefully, he pointed out.

Hosting of the summit by Iran was a welcome development, he said and added that he would be happy to work under the leadership of Iranian President Khatami, considering the ability he displayed in dealing with problems.

Pakistan's Information Minister Mushahid Hussain Sayed, in a speech at a seminar on "Pakistan's foreign policy in the 21st Century," held recently, in Islamabad observed that the OIC summit has been vitally important in reshaping the nature of relationship within the Muslim world and between the Muslim world and the rest of the world especially the United States, he said.

Iranian President Muhammad Khatami's address evolved a positive reciprocity for a relationship that was conflicted in the past. His address is very important vis-a-vis relations with the Western world and the United States, and for Pakistan it is important as Iran is a key ally of Pakistan, he said.

Referring to the Iranian president's address to the OIC summit and improvement in the Sino-U.S. relations with Chinese President Jiang Zemin's recent visit to Washington, Mushahid hoped that they would have positive impact on the U.S. relationship with Pakistan and the Muslim world.

Summit's Resolutions

The eighth Islamic summit called upon the Muslim states to halt establishment of relations with Israel until the Jewish state completes withdrawal of its forces from all occupied Arab territories and fulfills agreements to allow setting up of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

The three-day meeting of the 55 members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) concluded, in Tehran, on 11 December, 1997, urging those member states, that have opened missions in Israel within the framework of the peace process, to shut them down.

Al-Quds & Palestine

The 32-page final communique appealed to the UN Security Council to revive the International Committee for Supervising and Monitoring the Ban On Settlements in Al-Quds and the other Palestinian and Arab territories. It said since Israel has been using as-

sistance given by individual countries as well as the international community to colonise the occupied Arab territories it should be stopped

The communique hailed the resistance of the Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese people against Israeli occupation. But the Tehran Declaration made no mention of US-led Mid-east peace efforts. The omission reflected Arab and Muslim frustration at Washington's seeming inability or unwillingness to change Israel's tough stance.

Condemning Israel as a terrorist state the Tehran Declaration said "The OIC calls for the liberation of all occupied Arab territories and restoration of the usurped rights of the Palestinian people" said the Declaration. It also "condemns the expansionist policies and practices by Israel, such as the establishment and expansion of Jewish settlements and emphasises the need for Israel to desist from state terrorism."

The OIC states "pay tribute to the steadfastness of the Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian people in their resistance to Israeli occupation," said the text, calling on Israel to withdraw from Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese land.

In particular the statement attacked Israeli attempts to "change the status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the site of Islam's third holiest place of worship – the Al Aqsa Mosque complex".

D'Amato Law

In a separate resolution, which formed part of the final communique, the summit reaffirmed solidarity with Iran and Libya against whom the US has applied its D'Amato Law. It rejected any arbitrary extra-territorial and unilateral measures, whether political or legal, applied by one country against another. It urged all states to consider this law as null and void.

The summit called upon Washington to lift the sanctions it imposed on Sudan. It set up a committee to study the issue of unilateral economic sanctions.

The conference expressed its deep concern over some OIC member states establishing military relations with Israel. Turkish President Suleiman Demirel was among several absentees on the last day (11 December 1997) of the three-day summit. He left last night (10 December 1997), denying that he had been upset by criticism of Ankara for its military cooperation agreements with Israel and incursions into northern Iraq in pursuit of rebel Kurds.

On financial markets, it noted with concern the recent flux in the global and regional markets and underscored the need for better understanding of the dynamics of globalised capital in the environment of

instantaneous financial and information flows.

Terrorism

Both in the communique and another document called Tehran Declaration the summit condemned terrorism "in all its forms and manifestations" but distinguished it from the right of peoples for self-determination under 'colonial or alien domination'. It called on the international community to deny asylum to terrorists, assist in bringing them to justice and take all necessary measures to prevent and dismantle support networks for terrorism.

The summit being described by some of the participants as "most purposeful, revolved round the theme of dignity, dialogue and participation. Tehran Declaration which is different from the final communique has been divided into four sections Solidarity and security in the Islamic world, Revival of the Islamic civilisation and identity Comprehensive, balanced and sustainable development International participation and, Strengthening of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

The participants pledged to promote solidarity, peace and security within the Islamic world as their top priority and said it would work to set up a forum to study cooperation in security matters.

Muslim Issues

The summit expressed solidarity with the Muslim people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, deplored the continuation of conflict in Afghanistan rejected aggression of Azerbaijan by Armenia and reiterated full support for the people of Jammu and Kashmir in the "realisation of their right to self-determination in accordance with the UN resolutions".

It pledged commitment to extend full support to Muslim communities and minorities in non-Muslim countries in collaboration with their governments.

The summit considered the revival of Islamic civilisation as a peaceful global reality and expressed concern at tendencies to portray Islam as a threat to the world. The Islamic civilisation is firmly grounded in peaceful coexistence cooperation and mutual understanding among civilisations, it said.

Cultural Invasion

The summit denounced various manifestations of cultural invasions and called for the speedy conclusion of an internationally binding document to prevent blasphemy. It considered sustainable and balanced development in the moral, political, social, economic cultural and scientific fields as vital for the Islamic world and reaffirmed determination to ensure free exchange of ideas.